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ABSTRACT

This paper examines several issues involved in collaborative research between a kindergarten teacher-researcher and a university professor as they developed an early childhood anti-bias curriculum. Literature on collaborative research in early childhood settings is reviewed, and the concept of anti-bias, culturally inclusive education is defined. The evolving collaboration between the teachers is described, and the benefits for both participants in the on-going collaborative project are discussed. Barriers encountered to both anti-bias pedagogy and teacher research in early childhood settings are also discussed. Finally, several recommendations are made concerning anti-bias approaches in early childhood education, research methodologies, and support structures which attempt to put early childhood educators at the center of the research process. (MM)

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Antibias Early Education:

Toward a Stronger Teacher Voice in Research

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Abstract

This paper, written by a kindergarten teacher-researcher and her university collaborator, uses our work on early childhood antibias curriculum as a vehicle for examining a number of issues in collaborative research-- one way of reconceptualizing research in early childhood education. The paper briefly reviews the growing literature on collaborative research in early childhood settings and describes antibias, culturally inclusive education. This is followed by our stories about how the collaboration evolved, ways in which we have benefitted from this on-going project, and barriers to both antibias pedagogy and teacher research in early childhood settings, including public schools. Finally, we raise a number of questions and make recommendations about antibias approaches in early childhood and about research methodologies and support structures which attempt to put early childhood educators at the center of the research process.

Introduction

Many early childhood educators and child and family advocates have embraced multicultural education (Ramsey & Derman-Sparks, 1992) and have struggled with creating more culturally compatible and inclusive programs for children from diverse backgrounds. It has only been within the past decade, however, that a concerted effort to promote antibias education in early childhood (i.e., preschool through primary) has been initiated. Antibias education is an extension of the earlier work in human relations and multicultural education which often took an additive or "tourist" approach, focusing on holidays, festivals, foods, distant cultures, and customs (Derman-Sparks, 1988).

Following the publication of the Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children (Derman-Sparks, 1989), a small but growing network of early childhood educators committed to implementing antibias curriculum with young children has been organized. During the past decade, several early childhood research studies employing qualitative methodologies, including the research described in our chapter, have been conducted (e.g., Ayers, 1989; Jones & Derman-Sparks, 1992; Marsh, 1992; Paley, 1984, 1989; Ramsey, 1987; Romero, 1991; Swadener, 1988, 1989; Swadener, et al., 1992).

Following a brief review of the literature and a framing of the context for multiculturalism and antibias pedagogy in early childhood, we will share individual stories and dialogue, drawing from our collaborative research and experiences in implementing antibias curriculum. We have been influenced by the work of such teacher-researchers and collaborative writers as Janet Miller (1990, 1992), Marilyn Cochran-Smith (1991), Vivian Gussin Paley (1984; 1989), Bill Ayers (1989, 1992), Mara

Sapon-Shevin (1992), Mary Lou Holly (1989), Gloria Ladson-Billings (1990), Carol Witherell and Nel Noddings (1991), and Susan Florio-Ruane (1991). We have also been influenced by the work of Lisa Delpit (1986; 1988) and Denny Taylor (1989; 1991). This collective work, which has begun to move teachers and teacher-researchers' voices to the foreground of the scholarly discourse, has drawn from interpretive theory, phenomenology, life history and autobiographical work, culture centric and social reconstructionist conceptual frameworks. It provides examples of many ways in which early childhood educators are collaborating for empowerment and struggling for curricular and pedagogical transformation.

As Bill Ayers (1992) puts it, "Recovering the voice of the teacher--usually a woman, increasingly a person of color, often a member of the working poor--is an essential part of reconceptualizing the field of early childhood education." We share the view that authentic collaboration with teachers and listening to what early childhood teachers, parents, and other caregivers have to tell us is essential in the enactment of an antibias, culturally inclusive early education (Swadener, et al, 1992).

It is equally vital to recover, or listen to, the voice and perspective of children--particularly children who are not members of the dominant culture. Lisa Delpit's discussion of the culture of power and emergent literacy, for example, provides a framework for reconceptualizing progressive education approaches which may favor white, middle class children already becoming fluent in the language and culture of power. By listening to the voices of African-American teachers and parents, Delpit makes a strong case for making the rules of the culture of power explicit -- particularly

for poor children and children of color.

For several years at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, sessions focusing on "Through Children's Eyes and in Children's Voices" have sought to present ethnographic research on children in various cultural contexts, formal and informal education settings, and in family and community interactions. This body of work, including (e.g., Bloch, 1990; Borman, 1991; Graue, 1990; Hatch, 1990; Jacob, 1989; Soto, 1990; Swadener, 1991; Walsh, et al., 1990; etc.) has served to expand the methodological and interpretive frame of early childhood research, and relates in many ways to the aims and contributions of this volume. Most recently, the papers and participatory sessions at the first and second annual "Reconceptualizing Research in Early Childhood Education" conferences (1991, 1992) and the edited volume Reconceptualizing the early childhood curriculum: Beginning the dialogue (Kessler & Swadener, 1992) have served to broaden the dialogue and include more voices and perspectives of early childhood researchers, including teacher researchers, who are seeking to reconceptualize their field. This chapter draws from a presentation made at the First Annual Conference on Reconceptualizing the Early Childhood Curriculum in 1991.

Thus, our collaborative work is part of a growing reconceptualization of research in early childhood education, in that it is situated in the contemporary theoretical frameworks of phenomenological, feminist, and interpretive -- all research perspectives still struggling to find a greater voice in the early childhood literature (see, for example, Bloch, 1991; Jipson, 1990). We also acknowledge that our research is political and do

not claim that it is without bias. We also draw from the work of Patti Lather (1988; 1991), particularly her description of "research as praxis," and the work of Michelle Fine (e.g., 1992), in her warnings about the "ethnographer as ventriloquist" and her advocacy of making political research explicit. We also build on some of the line of teacher inquiry described as "socially critical action research" (Tripp, 1990; Carson, 1990).

Additionally, given the focus of the collaborative case study on antibias pedagogy and curriculum, our work falls within the framework described by Sleeter and Grant (1989) as "education that is multicultural and social reconstructionist," an area which is also only recently gaining momentum in early childhood theory and practice.

Need for Antibias Early Education

According to census information and demographic predictions, by the year 2000, one out of three Americans will be a person of color, and at least fifty three U.S. cities will be predominantly nonwhite (Education Week, May, 1986). Immigration is now the major source of population growth in the U.S., with over fourteen million foreign born people living in the U.S. in the early 1980s, and the total number of new immigrants totaling between eleven million and thirteen million for the decade (Carrol and Schensul, 1990). By the end of the 1990s, many schools will have a majority of students of color, while the percentage of teachers of color has not kept pace with the diversity of young people in schools.

These statistics call for a reconceptualization of the educational process in U.S. schools (Miller-Marsh, 1992). In order for educators to meet the challenges in the 1990s and beyond, they need to acknowledge that racism, sexism, ableism, classism, anti-

Semitism, and other forms of oppression exist in their lives and schools. We share the view that these issues need to be confronted by early childhood educators on both a personal and professional level. All students need to be engaged in activities that inform them about these social issues in authentic and developmentally appropriate ways, so that they are empowered to discuss, explore, and take action to make lasting social changes. Failure to meet the needs of all students could cause serious societal repercussions, including an increase in the high incidence of school dropouts, the miseducation of many poor children and children of color, and the creation of a generation of adults who will not be adequately prepared to compete in our rapidly changing society. Funding, as well as curricular, inequities (Kozol, 1991) add to the numbers of people in the U.S. who are living on the margins of dominant society and "in the shadows of democracy" (Polakow, 1992).

One comprehensive approach to curriculum that addresses the diverse needs of America's school-age children is antibias curriculum. Antibias curriculum is an integrated curriculum which attempts to be culturally inclusive and proactive in examining, in developmentally appropriate ways, forms of bias, stereotypes, and misinformation which contribute to a climate of oppression. It is based on children's developmental tasks as they construct identity and attitudes about themselves and others. Antibias curriculum not only addresses the race and ethnicity of a child, but includes the dimensions of gender, language, religious diversity, sexual orientation, physical and mental ableness, and class. Antibias curriculum challenges existing prejudices, stereotypes, and discriminatory behavior and attitudes in young children's development

and interactions. Not unlike multicultural education, which grew our of the multicultural and ethnic studies movements of the 1960s and 70's, antibias curriculum incorporates lessons and activities which directly address cultural diversity.

Antibias curriculum incorporates lessons and activities similar to multicultural education. The danger of becoming a "tourist" curriculum (Derman-Sparks, 1989) is lessened as antibias activities are infused into all units of study. Antibias curriculum goals are to "enable every child to construct a knowledgeable, confident self identity; to develop a comfortable, empathetic and just interaction with diversity; and to develop critical thinking and the skills for standing up for oneself in the fact of injustice" (Derman-Sparks, 1989, p. ix).

Educators choosing to employ antibias curriculum must plan and implement activities that will meet the diverse needs of the young people in their classrooms in order to plan activities that will help each child reach her or his full potential. Early childhood educators, parents, and caregivers have a large responsibility. Children enter early childhood programs and, often for the first time, experience playing and learning with peers from many different backgrounds. It is crucial, in our view, that early childhood educators help young children feel positive about themselves and others.

In order to better understand the strengths and limitations when implementing antibias curriculum with kindergarten children (ages 4.6 - 6 years), our collaborative action research study was undertaken. This study systematically analyzed the nature and quality of antibias activities which were planned and implemented in the classroom. Additionally, we examined the many ways in which young children raised antibias issues

in their informal play, discussions, and interactions. More detailed descriptions of our methodology and findings, as well as a critical analysis of this work are found in Miller-Miller-Marsh (1992) and Swadener, Cahill, Marsh, & Arnold (1993).

Our Evolving Collaboration

In this section, we discuss how our research collaboration evolved and describe more fully the study which we completed during the first year in which Monica implemented an antibias curriculum in her urban/suburban kindergarten classroom. This section will begin to raise issues to be considered in conducting teacher research and collaborative case studies in early childhood settings. Monica describes our evolving collaboration first, followed by Beth's interpretation.

Monica: During the summer of 1990, I had many things on my mind. In addition to planning an October wedding, I was making a job transition. In the fall I would be teaching in a new school district and making the switch from fifth grade to kindergarten. As if that wasn't enough, I was contemplating the number of ways I could fulfill the requirements for a masters thesis.

I had first heard of Dr. Swadener from a friend and fellow graduate student, Julie. Julie shared a copy of the Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children (Derman-Sparks, 1989), which was being used in Dr. Swadener's class, with me. We would often discuss the topics that were being discussed in Dr. Swadener's class. Since I was interested in both early childhood and multicultural education, I decided to seek out Dr. Swadener and ask if she would be my thesis advisor.

Upon our initial meeting, Beth expressed how she had been looking for a

collaborative teacher-researcher. She explained that she had just completed several projects which had evolved from a four year collaboration with a Friends School teacher from Pennsylvania. Her work had included a two year ethnographic study, the production of a videotape, as well as presentations and collaboratively written papers. Beth also explained that she had been Ohio for less than one year. One of the major reasons for the move to a more urban area was to study attempts to implement education that is multicultural in culturally diverse public school settings.

The idea of collaborating with Beth sounded very enticing. However, I reiterated that I was looking for ideas for my masters thesis research and wanted to finish working on the thesis before I moved on to another project. Beth assured me that the thesis could be a collaborative venture. We agreed upon a one year collaborative action research study that would focus on implementing anti-bias curriculum in my kindergarten classroom.

Beth: When I first met Monica in June 1990, I also had many things on my mind. I had been looking for a potential collaborating teacher-researcher. I had just completed several projects which had evolved from a four year collaboration with a Friends School teacher from Pennsylvania. My previous collaborative work, described earlier by Monica, had underscored the importance of documenting examples of positive/exemplary practice in the areas of human relations, conflict mediation, and education that is multicultural.

My research and teacher education interests were also continuing to evolve, emphasizing anti-bias, anti-oppression work, and by this time several women colleagues

and I had started an Institute on Education that is Multicultural, focusing on staff development and school change in five Cleveland and Akron public schools. When Monica came to me looking for ideas for her masters thesis research, and explained that she was particularly interested in exploring early childhood multicultural education approaches, I was delighted at the possibilities of collaboration. Monica's evolving interests in implementing an antibias curriculum in her kindergarten, combined with her willingness to be an active researcher during the coming academic year, were exciting. I was delighted at the possibilities of collaborating with her during her first year of teaching in an urban/suburban kindergarten. I am also interested in ways in which curricula are created, contested, and enacted, and have taught courses and done research on the hidden or implicit curriculum in early childhood settings. This, the idea of working with a teacher who was creating a year-long antibias curriculum was an appealing possibility, indeed.

During that initial meeting we discussed methods of documenting the first year of Monica's efforts to implement an antibias curriculum in her kindergarten classroom. Monica decided to keep a daily journal of her personal and professional observations based in many ways on the approach to teacher research recommended in the book Writing to Grow: Keeping a Personal-Professional Journal (Holly, 1989), and discussed by Oberg (1990). Other sources of data would include the children's work, particularly journal entries and illustrations, videotaped highlights of free play and centers, and Beth's observations, which we intended would be both representative and "targeted" to times in which antibias topics would be likely to be discussed by the children, including

some activities involving parents.

Monica: As the teacher researcher I would be responsible for keeping a professional journal. I would begin my journal on the first day of school and mae daily entries. The journal entries would highlight children's reactions to and interactions during formal and spontaneous antibias lessons and activities. I would also raise questions, issues, and reflections to discuss with Beth.

As the university collaborator, Beth would be responsible for observing my teaching of selected antibias activities and recording the responses and interactions between the children and me. We established that, during her biweekly visits, she would serve as a participant-observer, both working directly with the children and taking as many field notes as possible. The children provided another source of data, as they illustrated and responded to selected antibias activities in their journals and through art work.

Observations would be made at various times throughout the school day (e.g., during learning centers, large group activities, on the playground, and at snack). Data from the multiple sources would be collected and analyzed. We would look for recurring themes and begin making grounded inferences or posing further questions, based on our on-going analysis of the data.

As the teacher researcher, I formulated three basic questions which guided our study:

(1) How do children from ethnically and racially diverse backgrounds respond to formal and spontaneous antibias curriculum?; (2) What are ways in which children enact the

antibias curriculum in their play, questions, interactions, and conversations?; and (3) What happens to the teacher who designs and implements antibias activities?

My ideas for antibias activities and lessons came from two major sources, the Anti-bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children, by Louise Derman-Sparks and the A.B.C. Task Force (1989), and the children. The children generated many questions which led me to create and or search for more activities which would meet their specific needs.

Lessons and activities were designed around seventeen units of study. The units of study taught this first year, in order of presentation, were Getting Acquainted, I Am Special, Safety in Important, Pioneers, Native Americans, Immigration, Friends from Around the World, Knights and Castles, Resolutions, Cooperation and Peace, Tools and Simple Machines, Inventions, careers, Space, Our Planet Earth, Plants, and Animals.

Beth: Over the course of the first year Monica and I developed a workable pattern of meeting immediately after my classroom visits. During this time we would discuss my notes, observations, Monica's journal entries for the previous week, and brainstorm together future activities or extensions of activities consistent with an antibias approach. Looking back, our only regret about these frequent meetings was that we did not tape record them. Since this time, as we have collaborated on three writing projects, we have tape recorded discussions and found these tapes quite valuable in capturing the spirit of our distinct voices and perspectives, dialogue, and collaborative inquiry.

Monica: I would anticipate Beth's scheduled observation time. We would meet immediately after her observations to discuss and clarify field notes. During this time we

would brainstorm future activities or extensions of activities, share information related to the classroom, and plan for the next observation. I used Beth as a sounding board. I felt comfortable sharing the way the children were reacting to activities, as well as sharing the personal growth that I was experiencing as I challenged some of my own beliefs and realized some of my misconceptions. Being new to the district, I often felt isolated. I thrived on our conversations.

Journaling served as an outlet for the frustration and isolation I was feeling. As Holly (1989) describes, through keeping a journal, I watched myself grow. At first the entries consisted mainly of my fears and apprehensions about teaching antibias lessons and activities for the first time. As I grew more confident, I focused on the reactions and contributions of the children.

Through making the daily journal entries, I was able to watch the children grow and mature. Patterns in their behavior and thinking began to emerge on paper that I never would have connected without the documentation to review and analyze. At times I could make predictions based on the information collected in my journal. For example, we changed spaces on the carpet for whole class activities three times before midyear. As I looked back through the pages of my journal, I was amazed to find that each time the moves had been initiated by Anna. Anna had requested that we change seats because the children on either side of her were bothering her or "tempting her to talk and move." I realized that we needed to work on her level of tolerance and self control.

The children's dictated journal entries proved to be invaluable to me. Through serving as a scribe for the entries and viewing the illustrations, I had insights into what

was meaningful to the students. For example, many students had intense feelings about the war in the Persian Gulf and included comments about the war in their journals. The following excerpt was taken from Anna's journal. She dictated this entry to me on January 17, 1991.

> On Tuesday night I went to a program at a church in honor of Martin Luther King's birthday. It was a very long program and I got tired and hungry. There were lots of speakers talking about peace and why there should never again be war. There was beautiful singing by the choir. They sang "We Shall Overcome" and my mother cried. There was one song I knew, it was "Glory, Glory Hallelujah." The next morning I woke up and found out the war had started. I felt very sad because over there are mothers, fathers, and grandmas and grandpas getting killed by the bombs.

This information helped me to gauge what experiences, information, and perceptions the children were internalizing, as well as how they were interpreting these experiences.

Throughout the year, data from the multiple sources were collected and analyzed. The information seemed to fall into five primary areas: (1) race and ethnicity, (2) gender and sexual orientation, (3) holidays and religious diversity, (4) individual differences, and (5) socioeconomic status. The data we had collected was categorized using these broad themes, grouped into information which would address each of the three broad questions guiding the study, and coded accordingly.

Several recurring themes began to emerge through a content analysis of Monica's

journal, the children's journal entries and drawings, Beth field notes, and our discussions. These themes included the children's high level of awareness and interest in antibias activities, their generation of spontaneous discussions and activities, their unconditional acceptance of one another, and the apprehension that I felt as I presented antibias materials and facilitated related activities and discussions for the first time.

Successes and Challenges in Our Collaborative Work

As we have reflected on the dynamics, successes, and challenges of our collaborative research, a number of themes of potential relevance to other early childhood teacher-researchers and university collaborators emerged. In this section we discuss some of the strengths and supportive aspects of our collaborative research, followed by some of the major challenges, barriers, and frustrations. These lead directly to our shared recommendations for others pursuing collaborative early childhood research or action research in their early childhood classrooms or care settings.

Two of the greatest assets to the implementation or enactment of the antibias curriculum were the support of the parents of the kindergarten children, and Monica's principal. Parents actively participated in activities such as a family tree/ethnic roots sharing, an alternative Thanksgiving potluck, which focused on the diversity of families in the room and in the United States, and volunteered to be guest speakers to talk about their work, some of which represented non-traditional careers. Since a large number of students in Monica's classroom came from a Jewish background, which she was not completely familiar with, Monica relied on parents to educate her about their religious practice and customs. This helped her to better understand and explain holidays such as

Rosh Hashanah, Purim, and Passover when they were raised by the children during large group discussions.

Monica's principal was also very supportive of an antibias curriculum. She was willing to discuss ideas and make changes in policy. For example, the kindergarten classes were excluded from an assembly which was to be a tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The principal felt that the simulation of bus boycotts and sit-ins by older children would be "too advanced for kindergarten children to understand." After Monica shared some of the children's journal entries and pictures pertaining to class discussions and activities revolving around the civil rights movement, her principal agreed that these children did have an understanding of social justice. The kindergarten teachers were then given the option to attend the assembly. As the year progressed, Monica's principal became an advocate of the antibias approach and encouraged antibias activities throughout the school.

Similarly, the children were a source of many spontaneous or informal antibias activities and discussions. During the Getting Acquainted unit, for example, each child had a "superstar day." On their superstar day, they acquired the position of line leader, brought in some of their favorite things to share, and provided snack for the rest of the children. The following excerpt is taken from Monica's journal, dated September 15, 1990.

> Jack, who brought in a snack for his superstar day, told the class that he had brought in bagels. I heard the following conversation.
>
> Jack: Bagels are a Jewish snack. I brought them in to celebrate

Rosh Hashanah.

Sean: What?

Larry: I've had bagels before.

Meredith: I've eaten bagels before and I'm not Jewish.

We briefly discussed ethnic foods and the fact that many of the food that we eat originated in other countries. They seem to be very interested.

As collaborators, our roles, relationship, and "power lines" evolved from a professor/adviser and graduate student relationship to one of full colleagueship-- and we have continuously grown in this regard. For example, we have presented together at both national and international conferences, we have written collaborative papers, and Monica has published a book chapter, drawn from her masters thesis on the implementation of antibias curriculum. Monica has guest lectured in Beth's social studies methods course, and we have co-facilitated workshops for primary teachers, as part of a larger project to help teachers identify exceptional potential in underrepresented populations. We have travelled together to a number of conferences, including participating together in an early childhood collaborative training seminar in Nairobi, Kenya, and plan to continue our work together in the foreseeable future. Thus, our relationship is a strong and trusting one, and we have become strong allies.

This alliance, as well as our struggle to transcend some unequal power relations (e.g., mentor/student), relates in large measure to our shared concern that teachers' stories, concerns, action research, and other professional and scholarly work needed a greater voice and enhanced visibility. The fact that this research began as Monica's

masters thesis project was one way to help insure her ownership and authorship of the research. Beth, as a university researcher, had now moved from the center of the project or the "principal investigator" role to the background, as a consulting collaborator.

One of the greatest strengths of such collaborative partnerships is the reciprocal nature of the work. For example, as mentioned earlier, Monica was a frequent guest speaker for preservice teachers. Her classroom served, in some ways, as a "laboratory" for activities and curriculum theories which Beth was advocating and teaching about in early childhood methods courses. Beth served as a sounding board, and also a source of journal references, conference papers, and other information which Monica was interested in, but had less time to pursue.

Although we lived and worked nearly a one hour drive apart, our meetings and phone conversations were frequent, and proved invaluable in processing and making sense of the rich data which both of us were collecting in Monica's classroom. We have also engaged in on-going self examination, as part of our work on unlearning oppression and interrogating white privilege (e.g., Swadener, Cahill, Marsh, and Arnold, 1992).

In summary, Monica's communication with parents, her principal, and her university collaborator all served to break down the isolation so typical in teaching in a self contained classroom or program. This processing of events, issues, and challenges provided needed **structures of support** for doing research.

In terms of the challenges, shortcomings, and concerns which we faced in this project, a major challenge was the lack of materials and other curricular resources for creating antibias education with young children. Time was also a major pressure on both

of us. Monica needed time to create and plan for the activities she would infuse into the existing curriculum, actively involve parents and other community resources, make daily journal entries, meet with Beth, and complete her thesis. Zeichner (1990) and others have discussed the contradictions and problems created by so-called "teacher empowerment" strategies (e.g., site-based management, Professional Development School initiatives, etc.), including the increased time demands without a release from other demands, or "load building," often lacking in an increase in genuine decision-making or power. Popkewitz (1991) provides a political and sociological analysis of education reform, examining issues of scientifcation, professionalization, and continuing unequal power relations in teaching, as well as research.

Other barriers or concerns which we, and particularly Monica, faced included the lack of support, particularly financial, of the dissemination of Monica's research. In fact, her district allotted $11.00 for her share of the gas on a round trip to Philadelphia to present a paper at the Ethnography in Education Forum, and some administrators, seemed to have trouble understanding why she would want to engage in research as a classroom teacher. This lack of professional understanding, encouragement, and support may be even greater in pre-primary settings such as child care centers and preschools, where funds are typically extremely tight, and it is still exceptional to have paid planning time built into a job role description.

Another issue which we identified as a limitation of our collaborative work was the fact the although we differed in age and background experiences, we were both European-American, middle class women. This in itself biased our perspectives and

ability to interrogate and interpret our shared data. Monica's principal, as well as her assistant teacher, are African-American. Their interpretation of events and conversations which took place in the classroom were invaluable to our collaboration. Recently, when we were asked to write a book chapter examining some of the issues which our work on antibias curriculum addressed, the "writing team" was expanded to include a woman of color who could look at our data and interrogate our interpretations from another perspective. We are now able to examine different classroom situations from multiple perspectives. This more inclusive collaborative effort definitely took our work to a deeper level of cultural meaning and self interrogation.

Other issues which proved problematic to Monica's research included some of the isolation she faced as a teacher in one of only two "special" self contained classrooms (in her school). These two classrooms also happened to be isolated in one wing of an "open school" building.

Monica's kindergarten class was referred to as the "enriched kindergarten." Participation in this program was based, in part, on children's demonstrated intellectual potential. Each child was assessed, using the Kaufman Assessment Battery for Children (American Guidance Services, 1983). In order to qualify for admission a child must score 2 standard deviations above the mean, minus the standard error of measurement, on any one or a composite of the following processes: simultaneous processing, sequential processing, or mental processing. Since the district provided only half day services for kindergarten children, parents in the enriched kindergarten paid tuition for afternoon services.

The neighboring class was called the "Developmental Educational Program," and served as a self contained class for children with physically and mentally challenged children. There were nine students, ages 5 - 10 years, in this classroom. During Monica's first year of teaching in this building, these two groups became "buddy" classes, and scheduled time every Friday afternoon to engage in activities together. Shared activities included walks to a nearby park, teaching each other new songs and dances, and learning sign language. This proximity and growing classroom collaboration between both groups, proved to be an important component of Monica's informal antibias curriculum. It also greatly interested Beth, whose dissertation had focused on multicultural education in mainstreamed, early childhood settings.

Teachers choosing to implement antibias curriculum, as well as teachers engaged in any action research project, need opportunities to discuss ideas and concerns with one another. Monica describes the feeling of professional isolation she felt as the children from one of the other kindergarten classes in her school went running down the hall in their freshly made "Indian" headbands making "whooping" noises. "I had just spent the entire week helping my class unlearn these stereotypes about Native Americans." It would be less frustrating and mutually beneficial for teachers implementing antibias curriculum within the same school to identify themselves and meet on a regular basis. These meetings would allow teachers to share thoughts and concerns, brainstorm and revise the curriculum while, at the same time, provide support for one another. Similar to the movement toward "peer supervision" and "teacher empowerment," such a support system might also provide ways for teachers to observe each other's antibias lessons and

activities, and provide each other with feedback, much as Beth was able to provide Monica in the present study.

As described earlier, writing in her journal also served as an outlet for the frustration and isolation which Monica often felt. Again, however, time and other pressures need to be recognized and addressed. While Monica had the motivation of collecting data for her thesis the purpose of making daily journal entries was more "apparent." In the second year of our collaboration, and of her use of the antibias curriculum, her journal entries had become far more intermittent. As we discussed this, the analogy of an exercise program seemed appropriate. It is often hard to begin and maintain a new exercise regimen without a partner. Similarly, having a "committed listener," genuinely interested in your research and classroom dilemmas and successes, is one way to maintain enthusiasm and follow-through with classroom research.

Once committed to antibias curriculum, Monica found that most of her time was spent searching for and planning activities. Beth shared curriculum resources, including those she was using with preservice teachers in a course which used an antibias curriculum approach to early childhood social studies. Monica learned on the job which types of antibias activities worked best with young children. Monica argues elsewhere (Miller-Marsh, 1992) that preservice coursework and field experiences in antibias education should be required for teachers, so that educators would feel more confident to teach antibias, culturally inclusive curriculum, and would have more accurate information readily available. We advocate the development of a clearinghouse, similar to the national data base for bilingual education, which would also make it less difficult

for educators to access antibias materials and curricular ideas.

The teacher who chooses to implement antibias curriculum is a risk taker on both a professional and personal level. Personal limitations include admitting that there is much we still needed to learn, in order to present accurate information and authentic experiences. To fully implement antibias pedagogy with any age level, one must be willing to examine long held assumptions about diverse cultures, as well as about the ways in which we can all stand in the shoes of the oppressor. For us, an interrogation of white privilege, a deepened understanding of the Afrocentric curriculum movement, research on religious practices including holiday observances, and a closer listening to parents and children were all essential to our shared exploration of antibias education. Our research findings indicated that the young children in Monica's class were very aware of differences in color, gender, religious orientation, physical ableness, and socioeconomic status. The knowledge they possess seemed to have been transmitted largely through the media and the beliefs and values of their immediate families (Marsh, 1992). The children's level of awareness and interest in certain issues led to the spontaneous generation of many discussions and activities. This evidence indicated that young children are indeed "ready" for antibias curriculum -- if this curriculum is facilitated in developmentally appropriate, as well as authentic ways.

Recommendations for Collaborative Research

In this final section, we make a number of recommendations concerning ways in which early childhood teachers can find a stronger voice in the research literature and can be empowered to conduct collaborative action research. In this section, we take a

brief look at the encouragement and support of teacher researchers, beginning with initial preservice education courses, supported by district and building level administrative structures and policies and encouraged by active partnerships with university colleagues, and discuss outlets for such collaborative research.

Increasingly, preservice teacher education courses are requiring journals, and some programs have moved toward an integrated journal (across subject matter areas and field experiences). Long used in student teaching, the early encouragement of personal-professional journal keeping seemed another way to increased the likelihood that new teachers will be interested in conducting research such as that described in this chapter. In early childhood education, an excellent example of the role of both daily journal entries and frequent audiotaping is found in the work of master teacher Vivian Gussin Paley (1984; 1989). Other examples include a group of progressive early childhood public school educators in Chicago called "Teacher Talk," who meet regularly with education activist and researcher Bill Ayers and are writing a book, and the many teacher researchers who present each year at the Ethnography in Education Research Forum in Philadelphia. This latter work has grown, in part, due to the leadership of Susan Lytle and Marilyn Cochran-Smith (e.g., 1988).

Another preservice, as well as inservice and graduate training, approach which is intended to encourage an interest in teacher research is found in the growing number of programs which require a senior thesis, individual investigation, or other action research project during student teaching or final teaching internships. Another example, from the Alternative Teacher Education Program at Kent State University is a "Learning to Teach

Autobiography." Some programs, such as the field-based Interdisciplinary M.Ed. program at National-Louis University and the M.A.T. programs at Kent State University, build in a sequence of curriculum and teacher research courses and related experiences, culminating in teachers carrying out an action research project in their classrooms. Such programs involve a relatively small cohort of inservice teachers, who serve as each others' support system over the duration of one to two years. Another example of a group of teachers who came together in the context of their graduate work and have continued to meet for over five years can be found in the work of Janet Miller, Creating Spaces, Finding Voices: Teachers Collaborating for Change.

Early childhood educators and their supervisors or administrators need to make action research a priority. Observing the interactions and listening to the verbal exchanges that take place between children is a "natural" role of the early childhood teacher -- whether in a lab school setting or a public school. Documenting and sharing this information with other educators, administrators, researchers, and future teachers encourages professional dialogue. Through dialogue teachers can identify similar problems and begin to generate workable solutions. Teachers are empowered as they take ownership of their concerns and work together to help one another. In order for this type of research and professional development to take place, teachers much be given the time and encouragement to carry our their research, observe each other's classrooms, and meet with one another.

Additionally, teachers must be made more aware of the outlets for early education scholarship and must be actively involved in writing and submitting proposals

to present at regional and national conferences. If the reconceptualization of research in early childhood education is to avoid reproducing patterns of marginalizing the perspectives, experiences, and voices of early childhood educators, active efforts must be directed to the "full inclusion" of teachers and caregivers in the conceptualization and interpretation of research. Collaboration with university or other researchers and writers is one vehicle for helping assure greater participation of early childhood educators in the research and policy discourse. As discussed earlier, teachers need time and encouragement to collaborate, both with university researchers and with other teachers.

Our collaborative study also suggests a number of avenues for future research (Marsh, 1992). There has been paucity of research in the area of the anti-bias approach, with young learners. There is a need for further research particularly in the primary grades. Collaborative research is one way in which teachers/researchers and university collaborators can work together to identify and analyze critical incidents and classroom data (Lytle & Cochran Smith, 1988; Cochran-Smith, 1991; Swadener & Piekielek, 1991).

A second direction that research might take is to investigate how children from both ethnically and racially diverse backgrounds in a more typical kindergarten class respond to antibias activities. The antibias lessons and activities should be investigated at multiple sites in heterogeneous as well as "homogeneous" settings. As stated earlier, the children in Monica's kindergarten classroom were assessed and admitted to the enriched kindergarten program based on their intellectual potential. Characteristics such as advanced understanding, exceptional use of knowledge, and a high level of concern regarding justice were exhibited by Monica's children throughout the year. Thus, the

children's responses to antibias curriculum may not be representative of a more typical kindergarten population, and must be viewed in the context of this program.

Thirdly, there is a need for further exploration of how one's life history affects the way anti-bias curriculum is approached. Research needs to be conducted addressing how specific characteristics and qualities, gender, socioeconomic status and cultural background impact the way anti-bias curriculum is taught by an individual. Findings from this type of study would help educators define certain areas of focus which might be more meaningful for them. Teachers could benefit from sharing life experiences and perspectives.

In terms of antibias and culturally sensitive early education, it would seem logical that as many life experiences and perspectives as possible should be included in the debate and discussion of research in early childhood education. Such full inclusion of diverse teacher and parent voices, not to mention children's voices, will enrich our understanding of the multiple contexts of early childhood education in ways we can only begin to imagine.

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